



March 11, 2014

Representative John Shimkus, Chair
Representative Paul Tonko, Ranking Member
House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Environment and the Economy
2125 Rayburn House Office Building Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Shimkus:

As the largest consumer-based advocacy group in Vermont, the Vermont Public Interest Research Group (VPIRG) has been working hard to raise awareness about the issue of poorly regulated toxic chemicals in our homes and products we use every day. We are encouraged that your committee is working to reform the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA), but have serious reservations about the Chemicals in Commerce Act.

In recent years, we have successfully pushed for state-level legislation in Vermont restricting the use of toxic chemicals, including legislation banning harmful flame retardants, bisphenol A (BPA), phthalates, mercury and lead in certain consumer products. The current draft of the Chemicals in Commerce Act would undermine these hard-won protections for Vermont and other states that have taken a lead on protecting their citizens from toxic chemicals.

The Chemicals in Commerce Act raises other serious concerns, including:

- Maintaining a broken regulatory system within TSCA that has prevented EPA from taking action on toxins as dangerous as asbestos.
- Making it nearly impossible for EPA to require health information for new chemicals before they end up on the market and in the products we bring into our homes. This is one of the few areas where EPA currently has some authority.
- Significantly rolling back EPA's authority to restrict the use of existing toxic chemicals in products.
- Contradicting the recommendations of the National Academy of Science and the American Academy of Pediatrics regarding how chemical safety should be reviewed.
- Requiring EPA to weigh the economic benefits of a chemical – such as whether it leaves streaks on your windows – against whether it causes birth defects, cancer, autism, or infertility.

Vermont Public Interest Research Group

141 Main Street, Montpelier, VT 05602, Tel: 802-223-5221, Fax: 802-223-6855 www.vpirg.org



We are also concerned that the bill doesn't protect vulnerable populations such as pregnant women, children and heavily impacted communities.

We look forward to working with your committee to achieve meaningful TSCA reform, but unfortunately, the Chemicals in Commerce Act current falls far short of the needed protections for Vermonters' and all Americans' health.

Sincerely,

Paul Burns
Executive Director

Vermont Public Interest Research Group

141 Main Street, Montpelier, VT 05602, Tel: 802-223-5221, Fax: 802-223-6855 www.vpirg.org